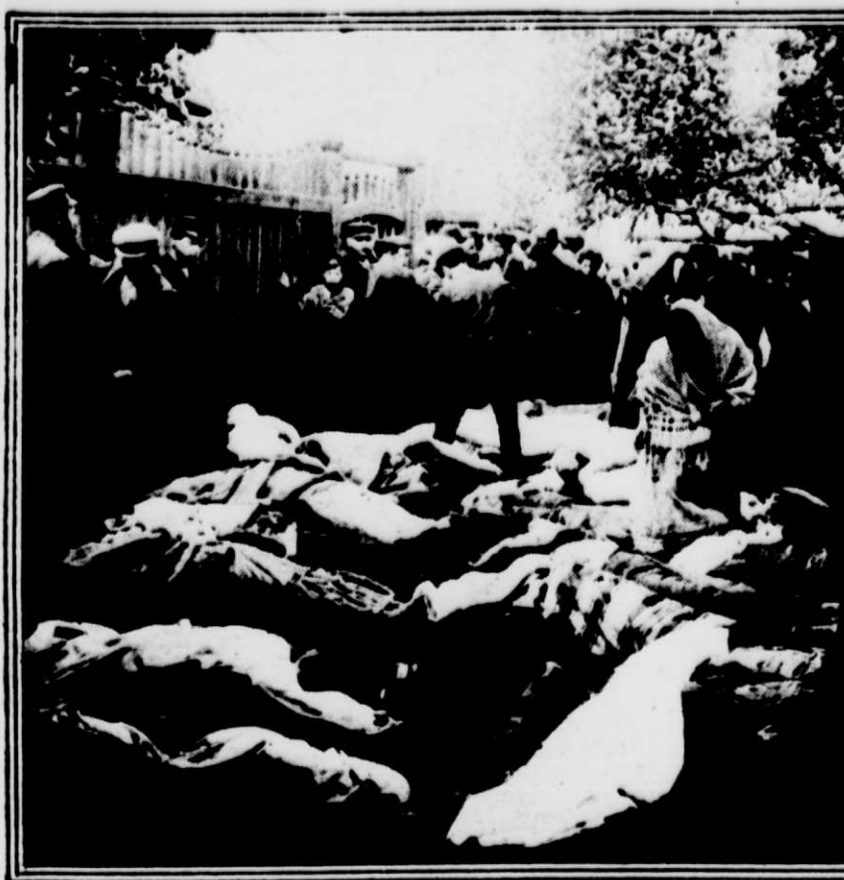


# "BLACK HUNDREDS" TERRORIZING JEWS IN RUSSIA



Victims of raid of the "Black Hundred."



## Inspired by Ritual Murder Trial Lawless Bands of Ruffians Have Begun Systematic Pillaging and Murdering

By W. B. NORTHROP.

RITUAL murder," as charged against the Jews in Russia is now recognized by those acquainted with the facts as a mere pretext for persecution. It is a signal for the terrorists, the Black Hundreds, to renew their onslaughts. Those most familiar with conditions in the Russian Jewish pale and in Poland have reason to believe that darker days are coming for the sons of Israel.

Strangely enough, this cry of ritual murder has always been raised previous to and as a pretext for persecutions. As early as the fifteenth century the murder of a boy, Simon of Trent, was cited as an instance of ritual murder. In this case a Polish priest of Vienna put to the torture and finally had the authorities execute several unfortunate Jews, one of whom, after weeks of inhuman inquisition, was alleged to have "confessed." The details of this third degree acknowledgment of guilt were laid before Pope Sixtus IV., who issued a decree against accusing Jews of ritual murder and also denounced the Polish priest and his coadjutors as actual murderers.

The same priest attempted a similar accusation against the Jews some years later. Assisted by a criminal named Paul Meyer he gave information concerning the kidnapping and murder of a Christian boy for "ritual" purposes. Meyer subsequently confessed the whole affair to be a fraudulent accusation.

Centuries ago several Kings of Poland prohibited the raising of this particular accusation against the Jews and a number of Popes have publicly condemned it. Pope Innocent IV. issued bulls in May and July, 1247, and September, 1258, forbidding the accusation of Jews on this charge; Pope Gregory X. issued a similar bull in October, 1272; Pope Martin V. did likewise in February, 1422, and November, 1447; while Pope Paul III. in May, 1549, positively forbade Christians to raise the cry of ritual murder against Jews under pain of excommunication. Later Popes have also denounced the time worn and what Michael Davitt called the "murder making" legend.

And yet, despite the history of this false and criminal accusation against the Jews, the same pretext is now put forward; and despite the acquittal of Mendel Beilis bands of lawless ruffians have already begun systematic terrorism against the Jews of Russia.

Unfortunately numbers of Russian minor officials derive direct profit—grat—from these persecutions. The Black Hundred organizations operating not infrequently under secret official sanction. Though many outrages and even murders are almost of daily occurrence throughout the Jewish pale and in sections of Polish Russia, Government officials are making little or no effort to prevent such acts.

Within the Jewish Pale, a district of Russia about as large as France, there are some 4,000,000 Hebrews. Among these defenseless and usually non-resisting people the Black Hundreds have again become active, taking advantage of the race hatred roused by the recent "ritual" trial at Kiev. It is hoped by widespread and systematic terrorism to create panic among the Jews which will ultimately result in their wholesale emigration or, failing that, extinction.

Numerous motives are assigned for the Russian hatred against the Jews, among which may be cited commercial jealousy, religious bigotry and the fear which a bureaucracy holds for a people whose tendencies are toward democracy and social reform. Racial hatred, of course, plays its sinister part also.

Aside from the motives behind the movement, however, the fact remains that the theatre is being staged for a widespread persecution against Jews in Russia. The trial of Mendel Beilis was only the prologue to the tragedy.

Russian officials connected with the police of the larger towns have long been growing rich by working in concert with roving and apparently detached bands of thugs and blackmailers whose depredations have recently become so daring and extensive that even the law seems powerless to cope with them.

Some years ago when the writer visited Warsaw he had an opportunity of obtaining first hand information concerning the manner in which these organized bands of terrorists known as Black Hundreds operate. Emboldened by successes, achieved mostly through connivance of Russian minor administrative officials, they present today a serious problem to the state. During the recent trial at Kiev they committed many atrocities in the outlying districts, and their supposed association with the influential All Russian League of Nobles has given them a standing and power which renders them truly formidable.

When, a few years ago, during an earlier agitation against the Jews in

Russia, the writer applied to the American Consulate at Hamburg for advice and information preparatory to visiting the Jewish Pale, it was plainly intimated that the protection of the American Government—despite the possession of a passport—could not be extended to any one who attempted to journey through the disaffected districts.

"It is positively not safe for any stranger to go through these districts," said a consular official, "and any one seen taking photographs is likely to be shot. The shooting of people on the streets of the larger towns has now become so common that it fails to attract attention."

Strangely enough, to such a pitch of excitement had the populace risen at this time that even the Jews were likely to resent the taking of photographs in the streets, fearing the pictures were intended for use in anti-Semitic journals. Several friendly European journalists and photographers were attacked and driven from the Jewish quarters. One or two were shot and their bodies left lying in the street as an example to other overcurious inquirers.

As the Russian minor officials and the police are addicted to systematic brigandage and graft it naturally follows that free rein is given to holdup men of every other description. The organization of these bands and their ingenious methods of doing business are almost unknown outside of Russia.

So much terror has the name of the Black Hundreds created in Russia that the entire population of many large districts have been overawed by them. All faith in police protection has been abandoned and no citizen is safe from their attack. Most of their crimes are committed in open daylight and in the boldest manner imaginable.

One section of the Black Hundreds has even developed what is known as a "Society for the Collection of Debt." Members of this organization prey upon small shopkeepers, whom they terrify into turning over to them the names of their debtors. With these names they make systematic calls on individuals and demand payment in the name of the creditors. Violence and even murder follow the refusal of payment on the part of the debtor. Inability to pay is not accepted as an excuse. Needless to say, debts so collected never reach the legitimate owners of the claim.

It is not unusual for members of the Black Hundreds to terrorize in broad daylight several blocks of a city. And this without the least interference on the part of the police.

One or two members of a gang will approach the residence of some fairly well to do Jewish tradesman and demand an interview. Upon the tradesman's presenting himself a revolver will be thrust into his face and the keys of the safe demanded. The least hesitation or refusal results in immediate attack. Sometimes in attempting to hold up a somewhat alert tradesman they will be met at the door by him with a revolver in his hand. A fusillade is the result. The Black Hundreds seldom fall victims in these encounters, owing to the fact that they are ready to shoot instantly, whereas the average citizen pauses before using a deadly weapon.

If the Black Hundreds know that they will meet with resistance on one of these "debt collecting" errands they immediately despatch their victim. So many outrages of this character have been committed that most people immediately open their doors at the Black Hundred demand. These bands boldly go from house to house and terrorize an entire district in a few hours.

They frequently leave in their trail murders and other atrocities of a cold blooded and wanton character. It is seldom they are caught or even molested by the police. It is this immunity that has led the citizens of the larger cities to believe that the police are actually in the pay of the principal bands.

One of the favorite moves on the part of these bands is to watch women returning from banks. The leader will offer to accompany a woman to her home, "owing to the risk of being on the streets in times of such danger." A refusal on the part of the woman of the so called "assistance" immediately results in an open attack.

At times women so molested will attempt to rid themselves of their would-be escorts and this always leads to a vicious and often murderous attack in the open streets. Pedestrians always flee from the scene of such crimes, fearing to be shot down or knifed themselves. An appeal to the police often results in the arrest of innocent bystanders or in charges being brought against the victims of the outrages.

Old people and children are not safe from the murderous designs of these roving bands. The writer is personally



Upper picture—Warsaw police arresting innocent passers-by after "Black Hundred" have robbed officer. Lower picture—Victim of the "Black Hundred" made mad by their torture.

acquainted with the details of one case in which the Black Hundreds demanded from an aged couple the sum of \$500 at a certain date under a threat of death. Somehow it had come to the knowledge of the leader of this particular band that the son of these aged people was making some money in England. The parents were told to write to this son and demand of him the sum mentioned and their lives would be spared. The son was advised to seek the aid

of the Russian police, but as he himself had fled the country to avoid service in the army and his passport had thereby been forfeited he could not return to the country without running the risk of arrest. A written appeal to Russian authorities would have been utterly fruitless, particularly as the officials immediately concerned in the particular neighborhood were doubtless waiting themselves for a portion of the ransom money. As a consequence there was nothing to do but raise the \$500 and send it to Russia before the date set for the murder of

the two old people. Had it not been sent the Black Hundreds would not have hesitated to execute their design. The kidnapping of children by these bands is so common a practice throughout Polish Russia that little heed is paid to cases of this kind. Hundreds of complaints following such outrages were at first lodged with the police, but in no instance did the officials manifest any inclination to put an end to the outrages. Parents so unfortunate as to "lose" their children now concentrate their attention upon raising the sum required for their recovery.

## Behind Prison Walls—By Julian Hawthorne

Continued from Third Page.

What he would have done had he seen the dark cells and the condition of the men who had been kept there for a few months may be conjectured. The public is indeed assured that the use of these cells has long been discontinued, but seven or eight hundred prisoners know that as late as last October a certain convict commonly referred to as "the old Englishman" was hung up by the wrists in one of them. And there were others.

Prison officials are political appointees whose controlling aim must therefore be the security and prosperity of themselves, and only afterward of the welfare and just and decent treatment of the convicts. They have their salaries (niggardly enough if we regard the work they are supposed to do, but affluent in view of what they actually do), and they have the Government appropriations for expenses and supplies for the penitentiary, which they are expected to handle economically. But economy and decent and humane treatment of prisoners in jail are incompatible, even were the men kept steadily and productively at work under proper conditions and paid for what they produce.

All properly administered would be one of the most expensive investments in the world. But Congress, as at present advised, thinks only of cutting down the already miserably insufficient stipend, and that warden who can, at the end of his fiscal year, show a balance in favor of the Government may depend upon holding his position, and nobody considers the moral ills, misery and outrage from which the favorable balance is derived. For not only if he wisely and honestly expended the supply of money insufficient but much of it is wasted by mere ignorance, negligence and incompetence, and much more of it, as recent exposures in newspapers indicate, leaks away in the form of graft. For all this waste the convict must pay in privations and cruelties not authorized or contemplated by a Government none too considerable at best—and men above grow fat and rosy gilled. But nothing is so difficult to prove or

so easy to conceal as graft—all the ingenuity and resources of the grafters are primarily and undeviatingly devoted to covering their tracks. So much is allowed for maintenance, subsistence, shown; the bills and receipts are prompt to be sent and labor lavishly.

Instead of that our habitual attitude toward them is that of indifference or even hostility. For why should we honest people waste our good money and precious sympathy on a convict? Has he not already robbed us enough?

It would be a shallow thing to hold up as monsters of hardness and depravity the officials who have been entrusted with the conduct of our prisons. If they do wickedly and corruptly it is not because they are to begin with preterhuman sinners, but because we summoned them to duties far above their capacity and training, which involve temptations and provocations which they lack will and power to resist; which give them power over fellow creatures which the most magnanimous and pure men might hesitate to assume, and which inevitably plunge men who are not magnanimous or pure into deeds of injustice, dishonesty and inhumanity. In a sense, the officials are no less victims of the ignorance and frivolity of the community than are the prisoners themselves.

But, at any rate, the officials are few and the prisoners are many. If anything is to be done to make things better there is more hope in dealing with the officials first. After they have been driven out and their places filled with honorable and enlightened men who will at least administer the law as it stands with integrity and judgment we shall be in a better position to consider whether the law itself be beyond criticism and its penalties justly and prudently devised. Crime as it exists is an enormous evil, and it costs us enormously, and cheap and pinchbeck methods will never rid us of it.

What fear and ignorance have built Shall pass with ignorance and fear Before the breath of Love; and man, Casting aside the mask of guilt That baffled, cursed and mocked them here, Shall know each other once again!—And must we die, release us near!

### THE WALL.

By Julian Hawthorne.

Atlanta Penitentiary, October, 1913.

THE long, high wall that shuts our life—

That death-in-life holds in its coil

The sky, nor check the immortal strife

We wage with sullen Fate, nor spoil

Our desperate hope, nor circumvent

Dreams, that deny our aimless toil!

What fear and ignorance have built

Shall pass with ignorance and fear

Before the breath of Love; and man,

Casting aside the mask of guilt

That baffled, cursed and mocked them

here,

Shall know each other once again!

—And must we die, release us near!

which we are not responsible. But for their souls and lives we are responsible, and to strive to redeem and succor them our own intelligent self-interest should prompt us to spend and labor lavishly.

Instead of that our habitual attitude toward them is that of indifference or even hostility. For why should we honest people waste our good money and precious sympathy on a convict? Has he not already robbed us enough?

It would be a shallow thing to hold up as monsters of hardness and depravity the officials who have been entrusted with the conduct of our prisons. If they do wickedly and corruptly it is not because they are to begin with preterhuman sinners, but because we summoned them to duties far above their capacity and training, which involve temptations and provocations which they lack will and power to resist; which give them power over fellow creatures which the most magnanimous and pure men might hesitate to assume, and which inevitably plunge men who are not magnanimous or pure into deeds of injustice, dishonesty and inhumanity. In a sense, the officials are no less victims of the ignorance and frivolity of the community than are the prisoners themselves.

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Jewesses in Warsaw mourning loss of relatives killed by marauders.

## Outrages Against Sons of Israel Are of Daily Occurrence and Darker Times of Persecution Are Expected

Failure to provide the exact sum has invariably resulted in the permanent disappearance of the kidnapped children or else their more dreadful return in a mutilated condition. At times dead bodies of children are returned by way of warning to other parents not to be remiss in the raising of the sums of money demanded within the allotted time. One unhappy mother was unable to gather together the entire sum demanded, but sent what she had on the day set for payment. As the sum was twenty rubles less than was required the child was returned with its right hand cut off. These and similar atrocities have roused throughout Russian Poland and within the Jewish pale a supreme terror of the name of Black Hundreds.

The trial of Mendel Beilis on the old trumped up charge of ritual murder has turned these Black Hundred furies loose and every day witnesses outrages which would receive wide publicity in the more liberal Russian press were it not for the strict censorship imposed on the printing of accounts of such crimes, which are naturally very offensive to the Government. The Russian bureaucracy does not like to acknowledge that it is unable to cope with the wave of lawlessness that is sweeping over the country and which has received added impetus from the ritual murder trial in Kiev. This was the signal for all sorts of depredations and the commission of crimes of revenge which have nothing whatever to do with political or religious questions. The Black Hundreds to-day in Russia are simply roving bands of gunmen, well organized among themselves, and held together by the sole motive of loot.

While the principal Black Hundred groups work in collaboration with political organizations, many independent bands prey on all grades of the population, irrespective of political opinion or religious belief. The fact that many of these robbers work in open daylight shows the extent to which the industry of looting has grown.

In the larger Russian towns were it the residences and many business offices are situated within courtyards, the gates of which are closed after 10 o'clock at night. These "brami," or gateways, form at night an impediment to the smooth workings of the bands and, consequently, they must conduct their affairs in the day time. When the ruffians ring at the door in the day time the police are seldom called; but the citizen opens the door and usually submits to be robbed without resistance. If any resistance whatever is offered the bands collect in overwhelming numbers and often run amuck through a district, terrorizing every one.

One of the favorite dodges of the leaders of these bands is to disguise themselves as laborers and ask for work on the streets. If the person addressed cannot provide work, money is demanded. Upon its refusal the bands are called and the pedestrian is held up. When kind hearted people provide work the supposed artisan obtains inside information concerning the place of his employment and imparts his knowledge to his accomplices, who rob the place under the most favorable conditions.

Killings in the streets are now commonplace in many parts of Russian Poland and elsewhere. Numbers of these crimes are attributed to the death of Mendel Beilis. The outcome of fact they are oftentimes the outcome of feuds between different bands of gunmen. In many instances they are the result of black hand or blackmailing operations.

One of the favorite methods of shooting down people in the streets is for the assassin to seize the first woman he meets and, linking his right arm in her left, shoot his victim from this position of vantage. The woman usually raises an outcry or falls in a faint. The crowds are attracted to the woman and diverted from the murderer who, in the confusion, effects his escape. The lassitude and indifference of the police on these occasions gives rise to the suspicion that they are either parties to the shootings or have been bribed to look the other way.

Naturally, where life is so insecure, the opportunity to obtain revenge on one's enemies is often taken advantage of. Bands may easily be engaged at fairly reasonable prices to "remove" persons who have become obnoxious to others. In the low drinking places of the cities leaders of these bands of murderers may be found bargaining for deeds of violence are soon struck. These bands may also be engaged for purposes of "framing up" charges against innocent persons.

The testimony of members of such organizations figured largely in the Beilis trial. It will be remembered that the woman who accused Beilis of the crime of ritual murder was a member of a gang of thieves who would not refrain from murder to achieve

their object. Nearly all the members of the underworld of Warsaw and such places are fully armed with knives and revolvers; and it seems impossible for police regulations or the statutes to deprive these people of their "right" in this respect.

Another employment to which these versatile bands lend themselves is aiding delinquent debtors to resist payment. Numerous cases are on record in which landlords have found it impossible to collect their rents. When they threatened to eject their tenants the latter have arranged with the members of the gangs against the landlords and demand that they cease to press for payment.

It behooves the Russian authorities to take a firm stand in the present situation; but the very fact that the Government itself did its utmost to obtain a conviction in the recent ritual murder trial indicates that it does not intend to rise to the occasion. During the outbreaks against the Jews at Kishinef in 1882 and 1891 many innocent persons lost their lives and horrible atrocities were committed by lawless mobs incited to frenzy by the same stories as are now being circulated. In all these early massacres the exploded fable of the ritual murder always played a prominent part. While the Russian Government denies complicity in these charges against the Jews it takes no open steps to end once and for all the ritual murder slander which is one of the causes of so many actual murders and outrages.

Until the Czar openly denounces those who bring these charges periodically against the Jews a solution of the question is impossible. Some years ago when Michael Davitt was travelling in Polish Russia and in the Jewish pale to investigate the causes of the Kishinef attacks upon the Jews he found that the false charge of "ritual murder" published broadcast in anti-Semitic newspapers had led directly to the outrages. Speaking of the matter, he wrote:

"The Czar can accomplish one good and blessed work, if so minded, without altering a single anti-Semitic religious law. The Emperor can destroy in Russia the atrocious legend about the annual killing of Christian children by Jews as an alleged part of the observance in Hebrew paschal rites. In the Kishinef and Christian tales the Jews are entitled to the cooperation of the Emperor of Austria, the King of Rumania and the heads of other European States where this story of ritual murder is constantly circulated and not infrequently a part of political propaganda.

There ought to be a truly Christian crusade waged against this infamous product of ancient inhumanity and hate. It was the inspiration of the most horrible of Kishinef murders, the driving of nails through the eyes of women, the cutting out of the tongue of a two year old child, and numerous less sexual mutilations. Thousands of innocent people have been done to death in the centuries through which these crimes have been the basis of a monstrous invention born of spirit of superstitious savagery. No age has yet made any honest civilized endeavor to exorcise this ignorant and fanatical Christian myth.

Let his Majesty the Czar add to his task to other noble duties, which his name is associated with, the ritual murder legend and its driving under severe penalties, its eradication anywhere and by any means in Russia, ordering that this ukase be read in the Emperor's name in every church in the Empire a fortnight before Easter each year for the next ten years—let this be done and the work is practically accomplished. Christianity, for civilization and for Russia too.

A similar obligation lies upon the Governments of Austria and the Ruman States. Rumania is at present the worst sinner in this matter. This legend is in constant circulation through the anti-Semitic press, being used, in fact, as an argument in political campaigns for driving the Jews out of the country."

There can be no doubt, from what Michael Davitt says, that this ritual murder charge is merely a means of arousing public sentiment against the Jews for reasons of political expediency. That the Czar has not so far issued the ukase freeing the Jews from the ritual murder legend and its driving under severe penalties, its eradication anywhere and by any means in Russia, ordering that this ukase be read in the Emperor's name in every church in the Empire a fortnight before Easter each year for the next ten years—let this be done and the work is practically accomplished. Christianity, for civilization and for Russia too.